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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KINSHASA 001161

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [CG](#) [ELECTIONS](#)  
SUBJECT: PPRD: EVEN IF KABILA WINS, CAN HIS PARTY SURVIVE?

REF: A. KINSHASA 1078

[1](#)B. KINSHASA 1036

Classified By: Poloff KRBel for reasons 1.4 b/d.

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: Although President Kabila is one of the most visible and strongest presidential candidates in the DRC's upcoming election, his ostensible party, the PPRD, is in organizational disarray and showing structural flaws which could pose serious concerns for the future. Unless the party's candidates can maintain solidarity and form part of the majority in the parliament, the National Assembly elections may result in a difficult to manage group of factions without a clear majority to take the lead. End summary.

[1](#)2. (U) Kabila's campaign posters are ubiquitous in Kinshasa, and his campaign materials project an image of confidence, competence, and presidential gravitas. While Kabila's banners continue to reflect his original themes (ref A), his thoughtful face now looks down at Kinshasa over a variety of new slogans: Unity, Strength, and Prosperity; The Champion of Promoting Women; "La Force Tranquille"; Youth Have the Power for Reconstruction; and, simply, Promises Kept.

[1](#)3. (C) However, the PPRD, Kabila's ostensible party (as opposed to the presidential candidate himself) seems to be playing catch-up in its attempts to win a parliamentary majority which would ensure its continuing relevance. Kabila's campaign was officially underway at least a week before the official party theme, "Hope for the Congolese People," was announced by PPRD Secretary-General Vital Kamerhe on July 7. Many of Kabila's key supporters are simultaneously involved in propelling Kabila through the presidential elections, and managing their own campaigns for National Assembly seats. While Kabila's success in the presidential poll is key to the PPRD's political future, the party's failure to launch a cohesive offensive could cost it dearly if its candidates fail to capture sufficient parliamentary seats.

[1](#)4. (C) From its inception, the PPRD has reflected the dangerous divide between Kabila's political family and Party founders. As early as the first Congo negotiations in Lusaka, Joseph Kabila knew that his long-term political aspirations required a political party. He reportedly asked senior advisor Augustin Katumba to help create an appropriate party; Katumba, whose interest was Kabila rather than democracy, never acted. Kabila repeated this request to other personal loyalists and prominent political figures, including now-Minister of the Interior Theophile Mbemba and Katanga's current Vice Governor Chikez Diemu. The latter two created the PPRD, a political party made-to-order for Kabila.

However, the loyalty of the PPRD flows strictly in one direction: Party members are expected to be completely devoted to Kabila's success, but Kabila displays little return loyalty and exerts few efforts on behalf of PPRD members or their individual campaigns. Kabila's decision to snub the party and run as an independent, claiming the role of "The People's Candidate," is just another indication of the Presidency's strained relationship with the PPRD. In fact, Kabila himself (along with Augustin Katumba and Secretary-General Vital Kamerhe) is not even a PPRD member.

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15. (C) The responsibility of senior PPRD leaders for promoting Kabila's presidential campaign is an extremely heavy burden for many individuals. Numerous senior members of the party have been tasked with personally "managing" the presidential campaign in specific regions outside of the capitol. At a historic moment when every Congolese politician is attempting to define his or her own role in the post-conflict government, senior players among the PPRD faithful have been diverted from their own futures to ensure Kabila's. No master list of regional "managers" has been made public, but the majority of those tasked -- such as Theophile Mbemba in Bandundu, Vital Kamerhe in South Kivu, Moise Katumbi in Katanga, and former Governor of Western Kasai Andre Claudel Lubaya in his home province -- are also struggling to keep their own parliamentary campaigns afloat.

Other significant "managers" of Kabila's campaign are not members of PPRD, but as members of Kabila's Alliance for the Presidential Majority (AMP, ref B), they are being assigned management duties in other strategic regions -- such as Olivier Kamitatu in central Bandundu, and Minister of Finance Andre Phillipe Futa (from PANU) in Eastern Kasai. In an election with over 9,000 candidates competing for only 500 seats, this diversion of efforts is particularly onerous.

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The pressure is enormous -- and enormously resented.

16. (C) While at first glance these might appear to be ceremonial appointments which would share Kabila's popularity with those appointed, the reality is that the "managers" have a great deal of personal responsibility with no real authority. The actual working staff at the regional level who manage the day-to-day details of Kabila's campaign are mid-level party functionaries with no apparent responsiveness or loyalty to their designated managers. Yet, in typical fashion, should Kabila's showing be less than ideal in any of these regions, it is the "manager" who will most likely pay the political price. The managers thus face a dilemma; they can focus on the presidential campaign to the detriment of their own parliamentary hopes, or they can concentrate on their election as members of the National Assembly and risk potential Presidential ire should their loyalty be less than complete.

17. (C) Comment. Kabila has created a melange of supporters who cross ethnic and political lines, and whose main point of unity is Kabila himself. This clearly benefits Kabila, but it leaves the PPRD -- which is already facing the strains inherent in a drawn-out and divisive political struggle, one in which the leader's success does not automatically accrue to his party's supporters -- much weaker than before. The risk that Kabila has created in managing his campaign in this way is that he may well succeed in being elected as The People's Candidate, but leave his erstwhile political party so fractured that it cannot help to govern. The real challenge of the Congolese elections is not only being elected President, but also maintaining enough cohesion to craft political alliances between majority and minority parties. The National Assembly will be dependent upon such alliances in order to govern the country and help it emerge from decades of mismanagement. The internal failure of the PPRD would significantly limit this possibility. Kabila risks finding himself in a situation in which he has won the

presidency, but lost the ability to effectively govern his country. End comment.  
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